

Early Recollections of Milton and Santa Rosa County

By Wiley J. Williams, Sr.

My earliest recollection of Milton was about 65 or 70 years ago. There was a population of about 5 or 6 hundred persons, with only a few small stores. The business at that time was done mostly in Florida Town, but later as it was thought Florida Town was sickly, and the result was Milton began to grow and the other got down. At that time Milton had not taken a name, was referred to as "Scratch Ankle," "Hard Scrabble," and other hard names.

I think Milton derived its name from old Dr. Amos. His name was Milton Amos, and he was the great grandfather of our present state auditor, Ernest Amos.

There was no cotton raised in the county at that time, but a great deal shipped from here, which was raised in Alabama, hauled here from Sparta, Geneva, Evergreen, and Andalusia. By the way, Andalusia at that time was called Montezuma.

There were a great many cattle raised and sold in the county. Two of the largest stock owners were Elijah Gaylor and Benjamin Cobb. They would let one pick their stock of large steers for \$10.00 a head. These steers would weigh from 500 to 700 pounds each.

A hunter could go in the woods any day and kill a deer or turkey, but we don't find them now. We also had wolves, bear, panthers, and wild cats to depredate on stock, but since then the large stocks have passed away.

The stock men are now mostly giving their attention to sheep raising instead of cattle, which is more profitable, as the sheep can go through the winters living on the grass, while cattle can not do so well.

We did not know the value of our lands until the farmers began to move down here from Alabama and Georgia and show us how our lands would produce, and show the fertility of our soils.

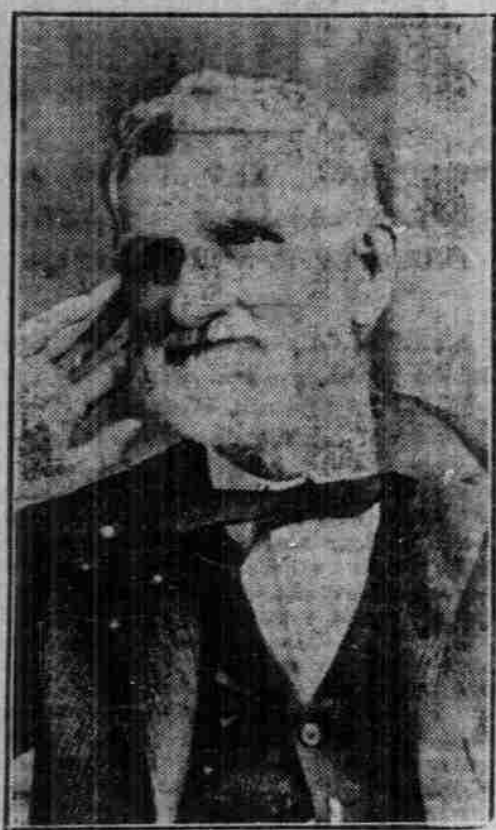
Mary Esther on the Narrows.

I should not forget to mention the improvements of our little town on the Narrows, "Mary Esther."

When I first knew it, in about 1875 there were only a few families there then, among them my old friend, John Newton.

He moved there from Walton county, built him a nice, comfortable home, and also a school building, but not a "punchon floor," etc. He taught school there many years, and he used his school building for preaching on Sunday. He had an appointment also out in the country, six or eight miles out, where he would walk once a month, but he told me that he was going to quit taking the walk, as the folks in the woods would not turn out to hear him preach, and he felt that he had done all the good he could.

"Why," said he, "I walked out there the other day, and called on a family near where my appointment was to be, and," said he, "the girls came in and shook hands with me and they



looked like they had not combed their hair nor bathed in a great while; they retired, and after they straightened their hair and changed their attire they returned and I actually shook hands with them again."

"Well," said he, "I did that much good; had them to wash their face and hands."

He told me of one of his students that he thought he had taught him as best he could; but said he came to see him, and he asked the young man how he was; he said, "I am well except I 'taken' a cold the other day from getting my feet wet."

I always enjoyed being with the old man.

He was so good, and I felt better and wiser after being with him. He was a good friend of mine.

He had only a few neighbors at that time, the Rogers, Bryon's, Capt. Ward, O. E. Weekly, Tom Brooks, W. A. Watson, Mrs. Condon, Capt. Green, those were on the bay, and then out in the back woods were the Davies and Oglesbys, and a few others, and now the woods are lined with settlers.

The turpentine men have taken up nearly all that country, and the beach is lined with hotels, stores and some saw mills.

Civil War Times.

I will now mention something of Civil War times.

I was appointed by the Confederate government as tax collector for Escambia and Santa Rosa counties, and C. W. Jones, father of J. B. Jones, the present city attorney of Pensacola, was appointed tax assessor.

We were together over both coun-

ties as near as we dared to go to Pensacola and Milton. Mr. Jones lived then at Bluff Springs, and we had to take one-tenth of every one's income or one-tenth of all corn, syrup, potatoes, bacon, and wool, to be sent to the soldiers in camps.

But we were allowed to commute it to money, which was done.

I thought Charley a funny fellow—when we would be riding along the road, he would strike off and gallop his horse for a mile and leave me. I then would have to catch up with him, and then we would poke along slowly until he would take another gallop.

Other Facts of Interest.

One of our progressive men at that time was William Mitchell, who built a mill near the head of Clear creek. It was one of the old upright saws, cutting about 2,000 feet per day. He hauled it to Milton, about eight miles, and got from \$3.00 to \$10.00 per thousand feet. He owned some slaves and also a farm and raised stock; both cattle and sheep—and made money. He also returned to his mill, after the war. The lumber that he sold then for \$10.00 would now demand twice that amount.

We had winter schools, lasting three or four months, tuition from \$1.50 to \$2.00 per month.

There were no public schools then. Now we have public schools everywhere, lasting from six to eight months in the year, and our school buildings are built by the school board, from the people's taxes.

The court house that was used before the present one was built, was a wooden structure and stood about where the public school building now stands, just across the street from the McWhorter residence, and the jail was about where Mr. Laird's is now. The jail was also a wooden building.

This was Escambia county and territory of Florida.

It was admitted as a state I think, in March, 1845, and near the same time Santa Rosa county was made by taking all of Escambia east of Escambia river, and a small portion of Walton county, west of Yellow river.

At that time the lands were very low—from one dollar to one dollar and twenty-five cents was a fair price. Now the same lands are worth from \$5.00 to \$12.00.

Charley Jones was afterwards elected to the United States senate.

When the Yankees made their raid from Pensacola to Flomaton and Pollard, as they passed Bluff Springs the river was very high with only a few highest ridges above the water, in the swamp.

The citizens of Bluff Springs, several of the Salters' and Jones' and other families hearing the raid was coming, all made for the swamp to get out of their path.

The Yankees burned houses as they

passed, and burned Jones's house with everything in it.

Capt. J. R. Mims, from Milton, was in command of a company of state troops, and only a few days before were attached to Clanton's cavalry near Bluff Springs, but after the raid passed, there were hardly two men to be gotten together; they had to make their horses fly and were scattered to the four winds.

Mr. Mims found those families in the swamp next day, and he told me how Jones was taking it. He said to him: "Mims, do you know if I were going to preach today, what would be my text? I would use this Scripture, 'Choose you this day, whom you will serve.'"

But he was a brilliant character.

"UNCLE WILEY" IN SANTA ROSA EIGHTY YEARS

ONE OF THE COUNTY'S PROMINENT PIONEERS, HE STILL KEEPS AN ACTIVE EYE ON THE DOINGS OF THE "YOUNG FELLOWS" IN MILTON.

One of the best known residents of Milton and Santa Rosa county, is Uncle Wiley J. Williams, Sr., who is eighty-three years old, and who has lived eighty years in Santa Rosa. He was tax collector for the county in the trying years of '63 and '64, and from 1874 to 1898, his last term of service consisting of 24 consecutive years.

He has always stood for the moral interests and advancement of his county, and will tell you with some pride that he has been "seventy years a Methodist," and has served officially in the church most of that time. "Uncle Wiley" is known and loved by everyone in Santa Rosa county, and is an energetic booster for his section of West Florida.

He takes the keenest of interest in matters of importance to his community, and is thoroughly in touch with everything which he considers worth while.

He is a man whose life history should be a lesson to all who have the real pleasure of meeting him, for his is a record of fine, clean, progressive manhood throughout a long and useful life, which sees its shadows brighten among the scenes which "Uncle Wiley" loves best, and among those who appreciate him fully, hold him in reverence due.

A FINE LITTLE MILLING TOWN IS PACE, FLA.

IS ONLY FOUR YEARS OLD, BUT HAS GROWN RAPIDLY AND DEVELOPED REMARKABLY DURING THAT PERIOD.

Pace is only about four years of age, yet it has achieved a goodly growth in that short period. The town is named for the man who founded it; but after the sawmill with all its accessories were established and everything in working order, Mr. Pace leased his mill and property appertaining thereto, to Mr. Martin Lyndsay of Mobile.

Pace is situated in a level pine country in the western portion of Santa Rosa county about a mile and a half north of Florida Town, which place is its port of entry so to speak. It is seven miles west of Milton to which place there is a first-class hard road leading. Indeed, all the roads running into Pace are good, traffic over them is easy at all times.

The population of Pace embraces about 600 souls, the male adults of which number, are nearly all employees of the mill company. The houses built for the employees are of a much better class than those generally erected by mill owners for operatives. The streets and back lots of residences are clean and well-kept and the town generally presents an appearance of neatness and freshness so pleasing as to deserve mention.

Extensive Milling Interests.

The operations of the mill, which are quite extensive, of course is the absorbing interest of the town. The mill itself normally employs about 200 hands in all its departments and the lumber turned out daily is extensive. The mill company in its operations, the management of the log road running into the interior north, a distance of 25 miles or about six miles from Folland on the M. and M. division of the L. and N. system. Through this medium the mill is supplied with most of its logs. It is estimated that the territory through which this road passes, has enough pine timber to supply the Pace mill with logs for a period of 12 to 15 years.

There is quite a large commissary, keeping a stock of general merchandise, which is sold at reasonable figures and which enlists the services of four clerks.

The environment of Pace as regards hygienic conditions, is such that there is no malaria exists; consequently the health of the community is excellent, and is of itself an attraction to settlers. The water is fine and procured at comparatively shallow depths.

Truck Farming Possibilities.

The soil of the lands adjacent to Pace is very easily cultivated, needs no drainage, and is adapted to the culture of the various fruits and vegetables raised in this section. Not much farming is carried on in this locality at this time; but people are fast finding out the wonderful possibilities of Santa Rosa county soil and before many years, Santa Rosa county will be Mecca of agriculturists from northern sections, coming to seek health, a genial climate, fertile lands, and easy living, all of which advantages this county offers.

MILTON HAS FOUR CHURCHES

THE METHODIST, PRESBYTERIAN, BAPTIST AND EPISCOPAL DE NOMINATIONS ARE REPRESENTED AT SANTA ROSA'S THRIVING CENTER.

There are four churches in Milton, all well supported and with flourishing congregations, being the Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Episcopal churches, each pleasantly located and prosperous enough in appearance. The Rev. Mr. J. C. Harrison is pastor of the Methodist church, and recognized far and wide through his commendable efforts on the "Dixie Methodist." Dr. Humphreys presides over the destinies of the members of the Presbyterian flock, the Rev. Mr. C. E. McDougall is pastor at the Episcopal church, and the Rev. Mr. J. B. Rogers has charge of the Baptist church.

These gentlemen of the cloth are all earnest workers in the great cause which they represent, and play a most important part in the welfare of Milton and its surrounding territory.

"Do you favor votes for women?" "I do," replied the London policeman. "It would be a great comfort to me to see a crowd of suffragettes marching up and quietly voting instead of making unkind remarks and throwing dynamite."—Washington Star.

Deservedly Remorseful.

"I'm sorry I ever married you!" shrieked the bride, on the occasion of their first quarrel. "You ought to be!" retorted the groom, really angry and bitter for the first time. "You beat some nice girl out of a good husband."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Hard to Please.

Grocer—What was that woman complaining about? Clerk—The long wait, sir. Grocer—And only yesterday she was kicking about the short weight. You can't please some people.—Exchange.

"Santa Rosa the Beautiful"

By L. Ross Bass, Holley, Fla.

Santa Rosa county, being the second county from west to east (but first, however, in beauty and resources) lies alongside of Escambia river from Alabama south to the "Base Line," then along Escambia bay to "Garcon point," back up "Blackwater bay" to Milton, then down the east side to the famous "Escambia point," where Blackwater intersects "East bay," thence across to the "eastern shore," and down the peninsula to "Town point," then extends eastward along Santa Rosa Sound to Choctawhatchee bay and Walton county, by which it is bounded on the east.

It is bounded on the north by Covington and Escambia counties, in Alabama. Santa Rosa county also includes the beautiful Santa Rosa Island, although this is a military reservation.

Milton, the county seat, is situated at the head of the beautiful Blackwater bay, has a population of about 2,000, and is on the P. & A. division of the L. & N. Railroad, also the new Florida & Alabama Railroad.

It is connected with Pensacola by railroad, and also by a steamship line, having two daily boats, the steamer, City of Tampa, and the launch, Helmar.

Milton has the finest of pure water, excellent educational resources, is surrounded by a fine agricultural region, and Santa Rosa is proud of her as our little capital city.

Going north you will travel over a splendid hard road, and pass some of the most beautiful farms in the state.

The Florida & Alabama Railroad, only recently built, traverses the county from Bagdad through the farming district, up Blackwater river to camp 3, the end of the road at present, though it is being rapidly pushed to Andalusia, where it will connect with the Georgia Central, thus giving excellent shipping facilities for all Santa Rosa.

Still further up, one reaches Coldwater creek, over which the Florida & Alabama has constructed one of the most beautiful trestles on the line. This place of workmanship is about a quarter mile in length, with an average height of 21 feet above ground. Over the main stream is a massive steel bridge, and the entire trestle is

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CHUMUCKLA SPRINGS, NATURE'S GIFT TO MAN

Flows daily 288,000 gallons of highly medicated water, and effects some wonderful cures—remained in the McDavid family for a century.

One of the vitally interesting spots in Santa Rosa county, is the Chumuckla Mineral Springs district, located in the northwestern portion of the county near McDavid, Fla. It is easily accessible from the L. & N. railroad, just thirty-three miles north of Pensacola.

Each train is met at McDavid by a bus, which conveys the visitor to the Escambia river, about one mile from the station, and here a launch is ready to carry you three miles down a beautiful river to Lake Chumuckla, known in Florida history, as the place where the treaty was signed, which located the boundary line of Florida and Alabama in the Indian and Spanish days.

On the south side of the lake is a new, modern 40-room hotel, and numerous cottages have been built, and here are located the Chumuckla Mineral Springs, famed for their cures of mankind's ills.

H. L. Bryan, son of Dr. Robert Bryan, of Pensacola, is in personal charge. The springs, which had remained in the McDavid family for more than a hundred years, having recently come into the possession of Dr.

a very picturesque sight, as it literally towers above the swamp.

Still further up, about 13 miles from Milton, the road crosses the old Roberts mill pond on a hill 23 feet high, then follows Sweetwater creek to Red Rock, which Mr. L. A. Free has designed to be a little city. He already has it laid out in lots, which are selling very cheap.

Further up on the line, the Bagdad Lumber Company are operating turpentine stills, and ship their spirits in immense tank cars. There are many prosperous farmers located along this line, and it is destined to become the leading section of West Florida.

East Bay. I will now touch a few of the most interesting points of East bay. This pretty strip of water lies eastward from Pensacola, and has along its banks some of the most picturesque scenes in the county.

Beautiful groves of oak trees, hung thick with long festoons of Spanish moss, line its shores, while here and there one gets a glimpse of a pretty home dotted along its shores.

Holley is situated on a prominent point, 20 miles from Pensacola, and is a village of about 200 inhabitants, and has a tri-weekly boat service to Pensacola.

The East Bay Transportation Company operates the launch, Grand Rapids, and the schooner, Grady S., on the bay.

The Grand Rapids is a swift, full-cabin launch, fitted with 20 h. p. Waukegan engine, and is commanded by the genial Capt. Lowery, with Chief Colley as engineer. It makes trips to Pensacola three times a week, leaving Holley on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, returning on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. It is fitted up to carry passengers and freight, thus giving East bay a splendid service.

We have here a tri-weekly mail, it being carried by the United States Mail launch, Delmonico, with Capt. Anderson as commander and engineer. The Delmonico has the same schedule as the Grand Rapids.

Harper is situated at the extreme head of East bay, and while it is not as desirably located as Holley, it does a thriving business.

The National Forest Station is located here, with Mr. W. W. Day as ranger. He has a pretty home near Harper, where the "stars and stripes" (continually fluttering in the breeze) reminds one that we are still in the "Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave."

Bryan, who is developing the project to a most satisfactory degree of success. Chumuckla Springs flows daily 288,000 gallons of highly medicated water, and is surrounded by fine fishing and hunting and camping grounds, amid the healthful piney woods of Florida.

Dr. Sunday, an old colonist, was the first physician to use this water in his practice, his first successes dating back to the year 1837. Since then each year people have been in the habit of camping near the springs, bringing with them their sick, and noting some remarkable results therefrom.

Leading Tragic Man—Did you see how I paralyzed the audience in the death scene? They were crying all over the house! Stage Manager—Yes, they knew you weren't really dead.—Tit-Bits.

Political Activity. What principal activities of the official position our friend occupies? "Those involved in holding onto it," replied Senator Sorghum.—Washington Star.

Conditional. I don't object to a man tellin' all he knows," said Uncle Eben, "if he sure enough an' honestly knows all he tells."—Washington Star.

Minister—Is this your birthday, little man? Willie—No, sir; I was born the second. Minister—Of what? Willie—Triplets.—Yale Record.

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